

PRESS RELEASE

May 18, 2006

**RE: UNITED STATES v. PHILLIP REILLY, JAMES SHIEL,
AIDEN TULLY AND CAROLINE McCONVILLE (06-CR-83)
AND
UNITED STATES V. PETER HENNESSEY, SEAN WHELAN,
DECLAN WHELAN, JOHN MCEVOY AND SHANE LAWLOR
(06-CR-82)**

United States Attorney Terrance P. Flynn announced today the arraignments in the Western District of New York of five (5) Irish nationals who were arrested earlier this month by Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement Officers in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. Appearing before United States Magistrate Judge Hugh B. Scott were Irish nationals James Shiel, age 26, Aiden Tully, age 46, and Caroline McConville, age 38, and Irish nationals and United States resident Sean Whelan, age 33, of Boston, Massachusetts, and United States citizen John McEvoy, age 43, of Yonkers, New York. They are charged in two indictments with various immigration offenses relating to the attempted smugglings of Irish nationals into the United States through Canada.

These appearances are the latest event in the District's ongoing efforts to stem a robust Irish smuggling ring which had been operating between Ireland, Canada, and the United States for the last few years.

In August, 2004, an Irish national by the name of Martina Mannion was caught being smuggled into the United States by Shannon Lee and Michael O'Malley, both of Buffalo, New York. She entered a guilty plea to illegal entry and was returned to Canada. Further investigation by Immigration and Customs Enforcement revealed that this smuggling attempt was part of a larger scheme being operated out of Campbell's Pub on Niagara Street. Michael O'Malley and the pub's owner, Bridget Campbell, have each entered guilty pleas to various smuggling charges. Campbell has admitted that between 30 to 50 Irish aliens had been smuggled into the United States since December 2003. Shannon Lee, who was a bartender at the pub, is currently facing charges in connection with her role in that smuggling scheme. Assistant United States Attorney Gretchen Wylegala handled these prosecutions.

This office continued to prosecute those found to have been smuggled in over the United States and Canadian border. In February 2005, Irish nationals Ursula Bradley and Sarah Moen pled guilty to illegal entry into the United States. Eleanor Skeeth, also an Irish national, pled guilty in September 2005, as did

Walter Drago and Colleen Murray, United States citizens assisting in the smuggling effort. Damien Tracy, an Irish national, pled guilty in December 2005 to smuggling-related charges. Assistant United States Attorney William Gillmeister handled these prosecutions.

Most recently, a federal grand jury handed up two indictments, the first charging Peter Hennessey, an Irish national, now a United States citizen, with encouraging and inducing two (2) Irish nationals to enter the United States, and charging those two (2) Irish nationals, Declan Whelan and Shane Lawlor, with attempting to enter the United States, after having previously been refused entry. Two other Irish nationals, Sean Whelan and John McEvoy, who both reside legally in the United States, are charged with aiding and abetting these efforts. The second Indictment charges Phillip Reilly, an Irish national and United States citizen, with encouraging and inducing three (3) Irish nationals to enter the United States, and charging those three (3) Irish nationals, James Shiel, Aiden Tully and Caroline McConville, with attempting to enter the United States, after having previously been refused entry.

The arraignment today concerns five (5) of the six (6) defendants who were arrested earlier this month. Declan Whelan will be arraigned in the near future. The next court appearance is

scheduled for June 20, 2006, at 10:00 a.m., before United States Magistrate Judge Scott.

The current indictments set forth charges carrying a maximum sentence of 5 years for the encouraging and inducement and 2 years for the attempted entry. It should be noted that the fact that a defendant has been charged with a crime . . . is merely an accusation and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. **(Disciplinary Rule 7-107(B)(6))**.

The United States Attorney noted that these cases appear to have shut down what was an active smuggling pipeline from Canada into the United States.